

## CLAIMS

What is claimed is:

1. A method for forming a receiver tube that is adapted to receive a hitch bar, the method comprising:

providing a die, the die defining a die cavity with a first portion and a second portion, the second portion of the die having a lateral cross-section that is smaller than a lateral cross-section of the first portion;

providing a hollow tube having an outer surface;

providing a punch having a body and a shaft, the shaft extending from the body and being sized to fit within the hollow tube;

loading the hollow tube within the first portion of the die;

inserting the punch into the hollow tube such that the body abuts an end of the hollow tube; and

advancing the punch toward the die such that only a portion of the hollow tube is extruded into the second portion of the die, the portion of the hollow tube in the second portion of the die forming a body portion of the receiver tube and an associated portion of the hollow tube remaining in the first portion of the die forming a head portion of the receiver tube.

2. The method of claim 1, wherein the hollow tube has a lateral cross-sectional shape selected from a group consisting of rectangular, square, and octagonal cross-sectional shapes.

3. The method of claim 1, wherein the first portion defines an opening that is larger than the hollow tube.

4. The method of claim 1, wherein the first portion includes a substantially constant portion and a transition portion, the transition portion being in juxtaposed relation with the substantially constant portion and the second portion of the die.

5. The method of claim 4, wherein the transition portion tapers between the substantially constant portion and the second portion of the die so that a chamfer is formed on the head portion adjacent the body portion.

6. The method of claim 1, wherein the portion of the hollow tube extruded into the second portion of the die has a wall thickness less than a wall thickness of the portion of the hollow tube in the first portion of the die.

7. The method of claim 1, wherein the shaft extends through the hollow tube after the step of inserting the punch into the hollow tube.

8. The method of claim 1, wherein the hollow tube has a substantially uniform wall thickness.

9. The method of claim 1, wherein the shaft is unitarily formed.
10. The method of claim 9, wherein the entire punch is unitarily formed.
11. The method of claim 1, wherein the grain of the material of the trailer receiver tube within the head portion and the body portion extends parallel to a longitudinal axis of the receiver tube.
12. The method of claim 5, wherein the grain of the material of the trailer receiver tube within the chamfer runs at an angle to a longitudinal axis of the trailer receiver tube and parallel to an outer surface of the chamfer.